



# Frederick County Board of Elections

340A Montevue Lane, Frederick, Maryland 21702  
FrederickCountyMD.gov/elections

301-600-VOTE (8683)  
ElectionBoard@FrederickCountyMD.gov



## MINUTES of the December 2, 2020 Meeting of The Frederick County Board of Elections

The meeting was called to order at 12:30 PM, via video and teleconference by the Board President, Mrs. Mary Lou Green.

### **PRESENT:**

Mary Lou Green, President

Shirley McDonald, Vice President

Lawrence C. Hill, Secretary

Mary Costello, Board Member

William Woodcock, Board Member

Daniel B. Loftus, Board Counsel

Stuart Harvey, Election Director

Noreen L. Schultz, Election Deputy Director

Clifton Mowell, Election IT Specialist

Christine Winer, Election Supervisor

Marc R. Welch, Election Program Assistant

MC Keegan-Ayer, County Council President

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### **GUESTS:**

Jim Filson, League of Women Voters

Deborah Carter, Chair, Frederick County Democratic Central Committee

### **BOARD OF CANVASSERS:**

Ms. Winer reports 12 ballots arrived too late for the November 2020 General Election, and need to be rejected. Mrs. Costello made a motion to reject the ballots. Mr. Woodcock seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mr. Woodcock made a motion to accept the September 9, 2020 meeting minutes. Mrs. McDonald seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. McDonald made a motion to accept the October 9, 2020 meeting minutes. Mr. Woodcock seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

## **COUNCIL:**

Mrs. Keegan-Ayer updated the Board on current COVID-19 restrictions. These are similar to what is in effect at the State level. The County has imposed additional restrictions on fitness centers and gyms in order to better mitigate risk. Frederick Health Hospital reports rapidly increasing cases, and capacity could be exceeded. The Council is trying to keep small businesses open, and is being careful to find a balance. Council has reelected Mrs. Keegan-Ayer and Michael Blue as officers.

Mrs. Keegan-Ayer also expressed the Council's appreciation for the Board and staff's work to carry out the election. She reports that public feedback on the election has been good.

The Board discussed the Council Liaison's report.

## **ELECTION DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Harvey provided a written report and provided highlights. He reports the Council approved the recent grant from the Center for Technology and Civic Life (CTCL). Mrs. Keegan-Ayer also mentioned that MACo will be more active in pursuing better election funding for the local boards at the state level.

The Board discussed the report.

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## **OLD BUSINESS:**

### **A. FY21 BUDGET UPDATE**

Mr. Harvey updated the Board on the FY21 budget. Overages and unbudgeted expenses will be covered by the CTCL grant.

The Board discussed the budget report.

### **A. NOVEMBER 3, 2020 GENERAL ELECTION REVIEW**

Mr. Harvey provided an overview of the overall turnout, which is unchanged in preliminary numbers. Biggest change in this year vs. 2016 is that 43% of voters used mail-in ballots in 2020. 6543 voters used mail-in ballots in 2016. 36% used early voting vs. 18% in 2016. State certification will happen on Friday, and once final turnout statistics are available Mr. Harvey will provide to the Board and also the media.

Mr. Harvey expressed appreciation for Jim Filson and Jim Brown who handled ballot pick-up at the drop boxes.

The Board discussed the just-concluded election.

1. ELECTION JUDGES

Mrs. Schultz said hiring judges for vote centers was simpler. She reported using most of our standby judges during early voting, and 4 had to be sent out on election day. There were no scheduled judges who failed to work without notice. There were 407 total judges, with a significant number of new judges.

Mrs. Green said that having line managers was very helpful to keep things moving while working within the health concerns of COVID-19.

Mr. Hill encouraged an after-action review meeting with the chief judges. Mr. Harvey agreed and will work on arranging it.

2. BALLOTS

Mr. Harvey said precinct-level results created challenges due to the large number of ballot styles. He said in a primary, especially with a gubernatorial election we'd need 78 of each party ballot style.

3. BALLOT DROP BOXES

Mr. Hill commented that ballot drop boxes are likely here to stay. 74% of voters used the drop boxes to return their mail-in ballots. The Board agreed that mail-in voting will continue to be popular in future elections.

Mr. Woodcock asked about any anomalies from the drop boxes. Ms. Winer reports no such issues.

The Board discussed the success, as well as selfies, at the drop boxes.

4. EARLY VOTING

Moving from Early Voting to Election Day with no break proved challenging on equipment and staffing. Mr. Harvey felt it will be beneficial to configure the schedule so there will be a break between Early Voting and Election Day.

He feels that we had a more challenging time at Governor Thomas Johnson High School due to FCPS' unwillingness to allow us to use the Main Gym as originally planned. He also says it may be time to look at a new early voting site for Urbana. The library is too small for the level of turnout the location

experiences. Mrs. McDonald asked about using a fire hall. Mr. Harvey noted that high voter turnout has the potential to interfere with emergency services.

5. VOTE CENTERS

Mr. Hill asked if vote centers are going to remain. Mr. Harvey said that it would be up to legislative action. The Board discussed how this might change how elections are conducted.

6. BALLOT CANVASSING

Mr. Harvey expressed appreciation to Mrs. Schultz, Ms. Winer, Mr. Mowell and Mr. Welch, as well as the judges who worked for the canvass. The Board agreed.

**B. MANUAL AUDIT**

Mr. Harvey reports the state board picked VC12 - Tuscarora HS for the manual audit. He will ask the Board to schedule the manual audit at the January meeting.

**C. MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS**

Mr. Harvey reports several municipal elections in 2021. Middletown's special election will be February 22, 2021. Additionally, Mount Airy, Rosemont, New Market, Woodsboro, Walkersville, Emmitsburg, Thurmont and the City of Frederick all have elections scheduled in 2021.

The December 2020 Brunswick special election was canceled since only one person filed as a candidate, so they were elected by acclamation, per the city's charter.

**D. VACANT POSITION**

Mr. Harvey will be working with SBE to advertise the open Election Supervisor I position in the office.

**E. OTHER**

Mrs. Green reminded the Board to send their election mileage to Mr. Welch.

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**NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. FY22 BUDGET PROPOSAL**

Mr. Harvey will submit the FY22 budget proposal to the County by December 18, 2020. He said there will be some guesswork since a budget for a primarily vote by mail/vote center election looks different than a budget for a "traditional election". He expects postage will be a significant amount. He expects a large percentage of

voters may permanently shift to vote by mail, based on the success of the vote by mail elections in 2020.

Mr. Harvey said SBE is extending the ES&S voting system contract through 2022. The reason to hold off on a change is due to the expected replacement of the electronic pollbooks prior to the 2022 election year.

The Board discussed the proposal.

**B. CITY OF FREDERICK ELECTION**

Mr. Harvey has been requested to meet with the City Board of Supervisors of Elections to discuss the upcoming 2021 elections for the City. He will meet with them on December 9. The City has approximately 48000 registered voters. They have also asked for comment on how vote by mail worked.

**C. 2021 GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION**

The General Assembly convenes on January 13, 2021 and adjourns on April 12. New restrictions are in place regarding testimony, which will be limited to a smaller number of participants and will all be virtual. More sessions will be streamed, and most in-person activity with members will be by appointment only.

Mr. Harvey expects a large number of election-related bills to be proposed in this session.

Mr. Harvey and Mrs. Keegan-Ayer discussed redistricting. She reports the Council has discussed the council redistricting commission, but most action will wait until the census data is received. She will be reviewing the Charter to see what timelines are required.

**D. OTHER**

Mr. Woodcock asked why SBE makes decisions seemingly without local input. Mr. Harvey provided an overview of the history of SBE, and how it fits into the legislative and executive processes.

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**NEXT MEETING:**

The Board agreed to hold its next meeting on January 6, 2021 at 12:30 PM via teleconference.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

At 1:40 PM, Mr. Harvey requested the Board adjourn the public meeting and proceed to Executive Session. This action is in accordance with the authority granted under the Annotated Code of Maryland, General Provisions Article, Section 3-305 (b)(1) to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals, and Section 3-305 (b)(7) to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice.

Mr. Woodcock made a motion to proceed to executive session. Mrs. McDonald seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

The Board recessed briefly to switch to the private video conference for the executive session, and reconvened at 1:48 PM.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Mr. Woodcock made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. McDonald seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 2:08 PM.

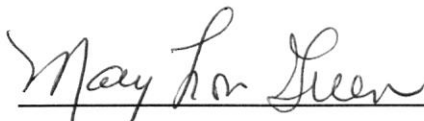
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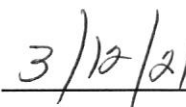
Marc R. Welch

Election Program Assistant II

Approved by:



Mary Lou Green, Board President



Date